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and this quality of his work appears to all the greater advantage in lectures prepared, as were these, for the instruction and entertainment of public audiences, and reproduced, as here, in the exact form in which they were first delivered. It is rare indeed that the original investigator is found to be, at the same time, proficient and successful as a popularizer, yet, little as the author would be pleased to have the latter title applied injudiciously to himself, the collection before us is none the less decisive evidence of this unusual combination of gifts.

The reader will naturally not look, in these discourses, for a systematic introduction to the Poetry of the Middle Ages; but, if he be in any sense a lover of literary origins, he will scarcely fail to find in them a stimulus to undertake a more detailed study of the sources on his own account, while if he be a novice in the subjects here presented, he will see opened up before him a series of vistas that will be sure to excite gratified surprise no less than vivid curiosity. The appearance, in a popular form, of a work of this nature, will doubtless operate powerfully in two directions: It will, in the first place, bring more and more to the front the philistine question, curiously enough more vexed at present in France than elsewhere, whether a critical study of the literature of the Middle Ages is after all worth the while, and will incidentally do much to secure an affirmative verdict; on the other hand, it will be certain to attract an increasing number of enthusiastic workers into the field of Old French literature. The book is especially to be commended to those teachers and students of French who, before undertaking the laborious task of mastering the Old French language, wish to feel well assured that they are to be abundantly rewarded for their pains.

The wide bearings and scholarly import of the researches of which these pages may be regarded as in some sense an exponent, are convincingly set forth in the author's preface, which takes rank as one of the most important chapters of the work. Of the not unappreciative review (though from a wholly unsympathetic stand-point) which the book has already called forth from M. F. Brunetière, the distinguished literary critic of the *Revue des deux Mondes* (June 1, 1885, pp. 681–693), we may, perhaps, have occasion to say a few words in a future number.

H. A. Todd.

Anglo-Saxon Reading Primers, Edited by Henry Sweet, M. A. I. Selected Homilies of Aelfric; II. Extracts from Alfred's Orosius, Oxford (Clarendon Press), 1885. Price, one shilling and sixpence each.

The aim of the editor of this new series, is, according to the first preface, to give "extracts from the more important works of Old English literature in a convenient and easily accessible form, and in moderate compass." "The want of such a series," says the editor, "has often been felt by students who have worked through my Anglo-Saxon Primer and Reader, and are at a loss for further reading." The teacher and student will concur in these statements, and be prepared to welcome these texts as supplying a need which is thus modestly understated.

Each volume gives something less than eighty pages of text, edited directly from the best MSS., to which is added a glossary of such "words and meanings" as are not given in the editor's Reader; No. 2 is also supplied with several pages of Notes. By this happy thought of Mr. Sweet the student of Anglo-Saxon begins to approach the classical student in the facility of obtaining trustworthy material, nor do considerable results, particularly in the domain of Syntax, seem too much to expect to follow from this unique enterprise.

A clearer notion of the scope of these volumes may be gained by observing that the first contains Aelfric's Latin and English prefaces, and eight complete homilies. Thorpe's text is untrustworthy as to the accentuation of the MS., and in other respects, too, Thorpe proved capable of grave errors, as his omission of a long passage, supplied on page 25 of the Primer, testifies. As an editor of Anglo-Saxon MSS., Mr. Sweet has long since won the universal confidence of scholars; in these last volumes he has added to the many obligations due to him from all lovers of our oldest literature.

James W. Bright.